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REVIEWS

Theories of Social Progress. A Critical Study of the Attempts to Formulate the Conditions of Human Progress. By ARTHUR JAMES TODD, PH.D., Professor of Sociology, University of Minnesota. New York: Macmillan, 1918. Pp. xii+579.

Everyone who has to deal professionally with books in the field of the social sciences is in luck if he escapes a rather early set of mind which confronts every new offering with the assumption that it will turn out to be futile if not fatuous. When the unexpected happens and a new book hurdles this prejudice there results a clear case of "a grand and glorious feelin'." Professor Todd has created that welcome sensation in the office of this *Journal*, and we hasten to congratulate, not only him, but the sociological fraternity.

Occasionally a book appears which must be adopted at once as the pace-maker for its particular kind of search. It must become a medium of consciousness for everyone whose business takes him into its field. Our vote is for assignment of this book to that class. Professor Todd has not attempted the impossible feat of putting an absolute meaning into the category "progress," but he has performed a service of high merit in plotting some of the outstanding features in the fortunes of the progress problem down to the present. In our judgment familiarity with that portion of the methodological tradition which this survey covers should henceforth be required of every candidate for the Doctor's degree in sociology.

We wish that our experience with sociologists had authorized complete assent to the first sentence in Professor Todd's preface: "From Comte onward sociologists have pretty generally agreed that the only justification for a Science of Society is its contributions to a workable theory of progress." We fear that sociology has had its quota of would-be super-scientists, whose indigestion of the raw notion "knowledge for its own sake" arrested their development at the stage pseudo-scientist. Yet happily sociologists have been a fairly forward-looking folk and most of them have had a saving sense of dependence upon some sort of progress concept. Their practical reason gave them enough working psychology to escape reliance upon isolated cognition as a perpetual-motion appa-

tus; and if they were sometimes reserved about what they thought their knowledge might be good for, the majority were moved intermittently if not constantly by the hope that it might ultimately be good for something.

The brighter side of the picture is that the most effective sociologists have believed in progress as an attainable good. Whatever their failures to ingratiate their particular conceptions of progress they have at all events made it harder for people who did not believe in progress, or who did not believe in being themselves disturbed by progress, to be at ease in Zion.

Meanwhile—the sooner we get it shaped up in our minds the better—there comes a stage, if our thinking holds out that far, at which it seems to us that we must choose between being scientific and being religious, because it looks to us impossible to be both. On another, but an intersecting plane, if we keep on long enough we surely bring up at a point at which we seem obliged to choose between being scientific and being effectively hopeful; for the two attributes present themselves to us as mutually destructive. In each case the escape from the dilemma is not to accept it as a finality but to follow each of the apparently conflicting terms a stage or stages farther until we arrive at a point at which these terms have revealed themselves to a few competently equipped adventurers as not contradictory but complementary. Since these thought stages are given in the nature of our thinking, it is more than a Sabbath day's journey toward our intellectual Jerusalem to become aware of their typicalness as thought stages and to make our plans accordingly. It marks advance from juvenility toward maturity to perceive that not science and religion, nor science and progressiveness are mutually exclusive, but only some arbitrary or premature content forced into one or both of the terms of either antithesis. Yet this violence toward the content of the terms is practiced incessantly. It is mostly inadvertent, or there would be fewer well-meaning people on either side lending themselves to the confusion. We are promoted one grade in the school of experience when we achieve ability to detach ourselves from the dialectic of our own and others' minds sufficiently to criticize the thought process as dispassionate observers and to set up danger signals wherever we prove to be assigning unauthorized values to knowledge on the one hand or to attitude on the other.

Professor Todd's book will be the prescription which wise sociologists in the next future will recommend to students who are suffering from the knowledge versus progress disadjustment. It is not a finished work

by any means; but we agree with Professor Patten that it would be well if more men with a message would send it forth while it may be most fertile instead of cultivating it toward a completion that might be sterile. This book will be taken most fairly, not as a thesaurus, but as a syllabus. If a professional bibliographer with the resources of the British Museum at call were turned loose upon it he could easily swell its bulk, but quite likely at the expense of its usefulness. There is stalwart common sense in the author's decision (chap. viii) for his purpose to treat selected theories about progress instead of attempting all-around justice to the men who held the theories. In the case of each type of theory discussed, if the author were supposed to have offered the text as exhaustive, he might easily be thrown on the defensive. Perhaps the chapter on the relation of religion to progress is most likely to call the attention of the critical reader to the contrast between the treatment possible, in a conspectus of this sort, for any single phase of the subject and an intensive study of one of these phases. The same relation is evident, however, under each of the subordinate titles. One might even feel within him some stirrings as devil's advocate when one finds how little unshared space is given to philosophical pessimism (chap. vii, sec. 3, and possibly sec. 4). But the author was probably right in deciding that his duty lay chiefly with the protagonists, not with the antagonists, of progress. It is to be hoped that the book will meet such grateful reception that the publishers will provide a second edition with a more adequate index. The defect of machinery is a serious charge upon the grist. If one vaguely recalls—to select illustrations at random—that Bachofen, or Ghent, or F. G. Spencer is quoted as saying something worth reconsidering, one is irritated at finding that the index leaves no alternatives except dropping the matter or hunting through more than five hundred pages to find it. One's temper is not improved by the observation that no principle appears to account for the presence in the index of numerous names and titles which one reader wants less to the exclusion of many that the same one wants more. And as to subjects, if "perfectionism," why neither "optimism" nor "pessimism," etc.?

But we find so much to praise that this fault-finding is mostly perfunctory. There is a peculiar clutch about the book in that, while dealing with a long series of more or less insistent dogmatists, it is never dogmatic, but constantly and contagiously constructive. While pointing out over and over again that this, that, and the other theory failed to demonstrate a formula of progress, the argument makes for the cumulative impression that the progressive temper and the progressive effort

are somehow in keeping with the scheme of things. And this impression is not produced by any sort of meretricious appeal. It is rather through the exhibition of influences so busy, so persistent, so prolific, so benign, that no wonder some men have thought each of them alone might be excepted as assurance of an unrealized something and as guaranty of the sovereign quality of that something.

In drawing the lesson of these repeated mistaken inferences the author keeps pointing out that it is not the operation of any single force which makes for progress; it is not the achievement of any definable condition, as an end in itself, that is to be identified with progress; but that so far as our intelligence can ever reach, the criteria of progress must be the making or not making toward qualities of results rather than the making or not making toward any end thought of as fixedly structuralized. In particular he proposes as one expression of the criterion of progress (p. 147) "interest in human well-being" and experimentation with programs projected by that interest. Thus progress is to be associated with pointings and movings a certain whitherward as alternative with pointings and movings other whitherward; the arbiter between alternative whithers being, to be sure, no absolute authority, but "more and more conscious and rationalized," yet at best fallible and never unanimous human consensus. This criterion then is frankly a judgment, not an invariable unit. But after we have caught up with Sir William Hamilton's conclusion that absolutes are not to be had in human house-keeping what more do we need than this respectability of direction in place of coveted certainty of goal?

"Man is the tool-making animal." Yes. "He is above all else an institution-maker" (pp. 180-81). Yes, but is it not nibbling in a bit farther toward the inwardness of the situation to add, *Man is beneath all else the evaluation-secreting animal*? Whether primarily as cognitive, or emotional, or volitional response, in countless varieties of reactions men produce in one and the same form with evolving incongruity, and perhaps later evolving congruity of content, the evaluation *this* is more desirable than *that*. This which we thus refer to as an individual judgment becomes, or was before, a group judgment. The problem of the priority formula as to the how-often and in-what-degree of group versus socius initiative in the matter need not detain us here. These evaluations become the content of the believing and feeling and willing of individuals and of groups. They represent to men the worth-whilenesses of life. They multiply, they amass, they affiliate, they segregate. They prompt to trial of realizability. They become personified in the people

who produce them or adopt them. These evaluation impersonators collide, in the group formations which they maintain, with more or less irreconcilable alternative evaluations. In the process the evaluations concerned go through a measureless scale of confirmations, refutations, eliminations, modifications, ramifications, and amalgamations, with a slowly accumulating deposit of general and approachingly universal and constant evaluation. At no time may men be sure beyond possibility of doubt that the trend of their conclusions may not bring up against some cosmic catastrophe which will deliver to their evaluation scheme its *reductio ad absurdum*. On the other hand it is much more certain that we should hasten universal smash if we shifted over to any other conceivable program than practical optimism, if we should cease to say *this* is better than *that*, and if we should cease to say that the ultimate *this* for our human program is every now and then the death of a vicarious elect of us as the price of continuing the evaluation competition rather than acceptance of physical life at the cost of aborting the evaluation process. Either working faith that cumulative and ascending better is given in the conditions of human life, that the method of trial and error in reliance upon convergence of human evaluations toward authentic translation of immanent values into controlling standards is a guide worth following, or a radical unfaith, which if universalized both in theory and practice would promptly annihilate all values except those that might survive reversion to universal struggle between egos at their lowest terms.

Dr. Todd must not be held responsible for our rendering of his constructive optimism, though our version is in spirit at least identical with his. He has persuasively reiterated his own belief throughout the book and his closing paragraph summarizes it in these words:

This long analysis will hardly admit of compression into a single formula: truth balks at such narrow limits, and men have learned to suspect the aphorism as an insidious half-truth at best. But as nearly as I can state what to me is the end of human progress, it would be somewhat in this form: that the final goal of all things, if they have or can be made to have a goal, is not some merely static perfection for God, society, or the individual; it is the identification of personal interest with social interest to an increasing degree. You may paraphrase this as consecrated intelligence, or as reconciling freedom of individual will with evolution of society, or as the identification of man individualized and man socialized. Anybody who has ever tried it knows that such a harmony does not come at one swoop. To believe so is to revert to the age of fable. Neither can humanity dodge the final responsibility for its own fate. To call in the gods is to court disaster. However you conceive the end of all things, man was surely placed on this planet to work out his own salvation. I am

not at all sure that the *inevitable and automatic* end of the social process is increasing installments of justice and greater elevation and expansion of the great masses of men. But I believe *it can be made the end* by steady, persistent preoccupation with the problem, and by that alone. Moreover, I hold it to be neither sacrilege nor lèse majesté to believe that with applied sociology and an education leavened by it rests this problem of harmonizing more closely through enlightened will the facts of social achievement and progressive social welfare.

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The Origin and Evolution of Life. By HENRY FAIRFIELD OSBORN.
New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1917. Pp. xxi+322.
\$3.00.

This is a fascinating story, told with simple dignity of style, of the development of life on our planet. In its scope and comprehensiveness the book furnishes a unique survey of the field. As compared with Darwin's epoch-making work, *The Origin of Species*, it shows how far science has traveled under the impulse of Darwin's theory. The author begins his account with the inorganic preparation for life in our solar system and on our planet. On this point he seems in substantial agreement with Professor Lawrence J. Henderson. In tracing the evolution back to the precellular stage of the bacteria and their forerunners he narrows the gulf from the inorganic to the organic and is in sympathy with the view "that adaptation will prove to be a continuation of the previous cosmic order rather than the introduction of a new order of things" (p. 10). He recognizes, however, that any theory to be of value must rest upon "experiment, observation, and research, guided by the imagination and checked by verification." In the vast survey of the development of life-forms from the bacteria to the highest mammals, covering a period of "perhaps a hundred million years," the author shows his mastery of the data now available, particularly the imposing paleontological evidence to which he is a distinguished contributor.

The book, however, is not merely a picturesque exhibit of evidence, but is illumined throughout by hypothesis. Indeed the advance since Darwin is no less striking on the side of hypothesis than in the extension of data. Darwin's great principle of selection by environment stands as an important contribution. But it does not account for the inner dynamics of the life-mechanism. This the author finds, with Weismann, in the heredity chromatin of germ plasm. This, however, is not independent of the three other energy complexes in the author's energy